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THE
ITALIAN MARAUDERS,

VOLUME I I I.



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THE
ITALIAN MARAUDERS

A Romance,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY ANNA MATILDA.

VOL. III.

What is man !

When the worst heart can wear the brow of virtue,
And false appearance smile us to destruction ?
And yet, what is he not, when crowned with truth
And every social virtue ?

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THE
ITALIAN MARAUDERS.

&c. &c. &c.

CHAPTER XI.

(Continued.)

THE words of Marianna had an instantaneous effect upon the grief of Angela. She hastily dried her tears, and enveloping herself in a large shawl which they had brought to her among

the scanty supply which had been given her, she descended to the lower apartment, accompanied by Anna, and bidding Pietro lead the way, Angela, for the first time since her confinement, passed the door which opened into the gallery.

They descended the stair-case which led to the hall. The noise of boisterous and offensive mirth assailed the ear of Angela as she approached the door which led to this scene of riot and confusion.

"Here is our beautiful prisoner," said the Captain, as Angela entered.

"Would she may continue long so," exclaimed a wretch whom Angela had

never before seen; a few days would make our fortunes. Well paid Captain, eight!"

"Peace," said the person whom he addressed, or you will be our prisoner ere long."

"Though not so profitable a one, perhaps;" continued Pietro.

The first speaker drew his sword.

"Strike," exclaimed Pietro, disdainfully, drawing his as he spoke.

"I hope, most holy brother of St. Mark, you will not excommunicate me if I do," exclaimed the other in the same tone.

The whole troop laughed; but Angela, who still did not understand the

history of the monkish Pietro, was all attention.

“Leave that to me,” replied Pietro.”

“Silence,” said the Captain, “or you both will suffer.”

Michielo, who sat next the Captain, now arose, and placing Angela on his own seat, took his place by the side of her. This conduct re-assured her, and she took her place with a lighter heart than her sad bosom had for some time contained. The mask sat opposite her, and apparently regarded her with fixed attention. The painful consciousness that he did so, depressed her spirits, and she longed most ardently for the moment which would rid her of his in-

trusive glances. That moment, however, appeared hours distant, and she endeavoured to bear his prying scrutiny with all the fortitude she was mistress of. The scene around her bespoke the persons with whom her evil destiny compelled her to associate. The wine with which they appeared to be very liberally supplied, was mounting fast into their heads, and the noise and confusion such a scene may be naturally expected to create, was here realized.

"We will," said Paulo, "introduce the skull of our unfortunate friend Cailo, and sip our Burgundy out of it."

Angela shuddered.

"It will be paying him a compliment.

When with us none more ready to follow such an example. This head was generally filled with it while living, and his skull shall be so now he is dead."

And he felt as little reluctance in preparing a person's skull for the reception of Burgundy, as any one present, I believe ;" continued another, as Paulo retired for the purpose he had declared.

The troop laughed ; Angela felt her blood run cold through her veins at the idea which these words conveyed.

Paulo had by this time returned with the skull of one whom he declared to have once been the foremost in helping

to demolish a puncheon of Burgundy, or the head of an opposing chevalier."

"Let us fill this ;"—said he, seizing the skull by the holes through which the eyes had formerly glared their malignant fire, in one hand, and lifting a large jug in the other—"There, you well-wishers to our community, drink to the memory of Carlo, and confusion to the wretch who gibbeted him."

"Would," cried another, "we had him here ; not a bosom but would be warm to give such a wretch the reception he merited. I heard him, myself, say to the officer who stood near him, as I stood beneath the scaffold,—that he would put a dozen such as Carlo out

of the world gratis, rather than they should go unpunished, provided the poverty of the State was so great that it could not pay him."

"We would make no such proviso, I warrant me," replied Paulo, "if we caught him. He did not, I will venture to assert, know that he was at that moment within the hearing of one, who, if he once had the wretch in his power, would for ever render him incapable of exercising those laws against any unfortunates whom fate might bring within their pole."

"Right," quoth the former speaker, pleased with the complaint which this speech seemed to convey,—“the full

length of my sword, and strength of my arm, should be exerted to rid the world of such a monster. But, Captain, where are those chaunters or minstrels whom Michielo brought with him from our opposite coast?"

"Order them in," said the Captain, but let a bandage be placed over the eyes of the elder one, as he comes from their own apartment to this."

"There is no occasion for that precaution to the younger one, poor fellow, he is blind enough, I believe," observed Michielo."

"True," said the Captain. "Silence, I must command immediately,"

continued he aloud, as the two minstrels entered.

The whole table was instantly silent.

"Take your stations," said Michielo, addressing the pilgrims.

They advanced towards the middle pillars of the hall. The young one, as he came forward, threw his sightless gaze towards the table, and appeared greatly agitated. Angela noted his behaviour in silence. At the penetrating and fixed look with which she regarded him, he seemed horror-struck, and would have fallen, but grasping one of the pillars, he successfully combated his weakness. The sight of her, however, appeared to renew his emo-

tion. But of him she had not the least recollection. He was above the middle height, but his figure was completely enveloped with a large cloak, from beneath which he drew his instrument. His features appeared to have been exposed to the sun since his birth ; his face was of the darkest tan ; and his whole appearance bespoke his having followed his present profession since his days of childhood.

“ Let us have a song relating deeds of due import,” said Michielo, addressing the minstrels.

They immediately complied, and the elder, whose deep-toned voice sunk into the heart of Angel, sung the follow-

ing verse, accompanied on the guitar
by the youth :—

Far stretch'd o'er the plain were the rays of the
sun,

And darkness descended around,
And twilight's grey glimmers now danc'd o'er the
deep,

And cast its last shades on the ground ;

When Hengo from far urg'd his steed o'er the
heath,

His helm from his forehead he cast ;
For rightly he thought, as he sped him so swift,
That he howled aloud on the blast.

His ample round shield from its buckler was
thrown,

His breast-plates were loos'd to the wind,
His falchion, alone, he retain'd by his side,
Within its stain'd scabbard confin'd.

He drew close around him his cloak's ample folds,
Set spurs in his courser's proud side,
And o'er the dark heath as he hasten'd along,
The fast-coming storm he defy'd.

He soon, from afar, heard the thunder loud howl,
The lightning illumin'd his way,
The ocean, loud roaring, roll'd dark at his feet,
On its bosom reflecting the ray.

Full oft had the coarser, which Hengo now rode,
Been urg'd on the spears of the foe ;
And oft had his breast, bright arm'd for the fight,
Borne down the proud combatants low.

But the lightning descending, fell fork'd from the
sky,

It flash'd on the breast of the steed,
No more will he stretch his swift course o'er the
plain,

No more see the warrior bleed.

"Call eagles around," said the Knight with a sigh;

"Let them feed, now thy nerves are unstrung;
By wolves from yon rocks be thy sepulchre form'd,
And thy knell by the vultures be wrung.

Thou wert brave in thy life, be thou brave in thy
death,

Let yon rock form the mound o'er thy grave,
The wild driving blast, as it howls o'er the main,
Will sweep tears from the bellowing wave.

Now the spirits of night, from their caverns of
winds,

Bade the tempest abandon the plain,
No longer the thunder roll'd o'er the dark heath,
No longer descended the rain.

When Hengo once more brav'd the perils of night,
Once more sought his own castle-walls,
Again thought he heard the loud song of the bard
Re-echo once more in his halls.

Now memory pictur'd the joys that were pass'd,
 And gave them anew to his mind ;
 Strike, strike," he exclaim'd, " strike the strings
 of the harp,
 And give its sweet tones to the wind.

" Oh ! save one, Sir Knight," cried a voice that
 was nigh,

" Let thy spear against treach'ry be hurl'd ;
 Let thy sword interpose, ere oppression succeed
 In tearing a wretch from the world."

The crescent of night, from its palace of clouds,
 Let fall on the mountain a ray,
 And o'er the dark waste, as its beams faintly play'd,
 For a moment illumin'd his way.

" Oh ! save me, Sir Knight," cried a voice at his
 feet,

And the sprite press'd his hand to her breast,
 " Oh ! where shall I find for this bosom repose ?
 Oh ! where can the weary find rest ?"

It was not in vain the appeal of the maid,

The Knight drew his sword on the foe :—

“ Base villains,” he cried—“ be thy souls to the
shades,”

And he laid the dark ravishers low.

“ See! there, stretch’d at thy feet,”—said, ex-
ulting, the Knight,

Whom lately thy weakness oppress’d,

But ’twas not by my sword that the ransom was
bought,

’Twas thy beauty thy sorrows redress’d.

“ And wilt thou be mine?”—he rejoin’d with a
sigh ;

Will mine be a blessing so rare ?

What hours of anguish for moments of joy,

With one that’s so soft and so fair.”

Now soon through the mist he descries the grey
walls,

And the scenes he in infancy knew ;

And he eager recounts the gay theme to the maid,
As they each rise alternate to view.

“And here will we rest,” said the Knight, with a
smile,

As he pac’d the high hall of his pride,
“And tho’ by the world thou deserted hast been,
Be thy safest retreat by my side.”

He no more hears the blast, or the trumpet’s loud
roar,

By slaughter no longer is pain’d,
But far from the field of mad discord he strays
With the beauty his valour had gain’d.

“Bravo! bravo!”—said the whole
troop, in a breath:—“Admirable !
faith.”

“Let it be repeated, then, if you
choose;”—cried the Captain.

“By all means, Captain ;” cried one of the robbers—“such a story as that should inspire examples ; and then, perhaps, our prisoner might be free”—looking at Angela—“Knights can overcome great difficulties, you know.”

“Peace,” said Michielo, apparently greatly enraged at the speaker. The man immediately obeyed, and the second commencement of the piece completely restored silence.

Angela regarded the younger of the two minstrels with a scrutinizing glance and anxious eye. He appeared in pain during the whole performance, and she thought he would have fallen several times during the continuance of it, but

for the assistance which the arm of his elder companion gave him, who appeared with his face intently fixed upon that of his younger friend.

The piece was again concluded amidst the most rapturous applause upon the part of the robbers, who, unused to music of any kind, except the clashing of swords, or the shrieks of their fallen antagonists, were as delighted with the sounds produced by this son of Apollo, as were the roaming inhabitants of the woods are recorded to have been with those which Orpheus caused to flow from his magical lyre.

At length, however, the chain was

broken, and they became robbers again.

“Hand me the skull of Carlo,” cried one, “that I may empty its contents into my own.”

“And yours will lie under the table, equally flat, too,” cried another, “if you do that.”

“There is but little difference already between them, I believe;” said Pietro.

“There shall be none between yours and his in a moment,” retorted his opponent,—“if this Spanish blade does not fail me; at least, there shall not—”

“Peace;” said the Captain. “Minstrel, let’s have some melting love ditty,

perhaps it may be more agreeable to this lady;" turning to Angel, as he spoke.

"By no means, Signor;" said Angela, seizing this opportunity to declare her sentiments—"if I am to be your prisoner, do not add insult to injury, but let me retire to my chamber."

The mask rose from his seat.

"Signor,"—cried Michiolo, "be seated. Thus your Signora's whining will not have any effect upon us; she shall sit till doom's-day, if it be your wish."

"I hope you will not be so cruel as to detain her that time," cried Pietro—"she may wish it near, and the prayers

of the *virtuous* may have some effect, you know. But, Captain," continued Pietro—"let us have this love stave that you have promised."

"Begin, then," cried the Captain, addressing the singer.

He again obeyed, and sung the following words:—

Cold blew the wind across the heath,
Chill'd were the dew-drops on the thorn,
And bleak and cheerless was the breath
Of sadly-rising clouded morn,

A sleepless night had Ida pass'd,
Her Herman from his cot had roam'd;
She, anxious, listen'd to the blast,
And trembl'd as the forest grean'd.

From her low couch the matron stole,
 Pale boding terror fill'd her breast ;
 She sought the darling of her soul,
 And wander'd far from home and rest.

Fate sped her swiftly on her way,
 She reach'd the Danube's farthest shore,
 The battle rag'd with direst sway,
 And Ida saw her love no more.

Far from his home and children dear,
 His country's foes did Herman brave,
 The grass-grown hillock form'd his bier,
 His comrades bore him to the grave.

The earth was closed o'er his pale form,
 Ere Ida reach'd the hallow'd mound,
 Yet where he fell the turf was warm
 With gore that trick'd from the wound.

The lovely dame each relic view'd,
The blood, the grave, alternate ey'd,
Call'd her lov'd lord in pensive mood,
Then sunk upon the ground and died."

" Oh ! how sweet ! cried one of the
troop, who had hitherto been silent—

" Captain, were you ever in love ?"

" Oh, yes ! to be sure, I was," he
replied.

" Then, let us,"—cried another,—
have your story."

" Do give it us, Captain—" they all
cried in a breath.

" Agreed,"—replied he ; and silence
being proclaimed, he began as follows :
having previously ordered a robber to
conduct the minstrels back to their
apartment.

CHAPTER XII.

*(The Story which the Captain of the
Banditti related.)*

“ THERE is, Gentlemen, cried the Captain very little difference between the business which my father pursued, and that which I follow. We were both masters of the art. He robbed the community through the medium of the state, for he was a senator. I rob the

state through the medium of the community, for I am a Captain of banditti. Well, Gentlemen, with the profits of this said senatorial plunder, I was educated.

“ My tutor, who was considered one of the most learned and most pious men in Venice, was, beneath the long habit and cowl which he wore, one of the completest debauchees in that city. So that, Gentlemen, instead of the virtue and honour, learning and piety, which I was to acquire, I came away only with the knowledge how to avoid the scaffold, and at the same time attain the objects for which I derived such a remuneration. With such requisitions

it is surprising, you'll say, I am not even now, instead of being a Captain without the pale of the law, I am not a general within it. Life has its vicissitudes, and I will detail those which have marked mine.

"My days of childhood passed quickly away, marked by nothing particularly extraordinary, except indeed we may say a few tricks which my nurse foretold were indicative of my future greatness. To these favourable prognostications, however, my father appeared deaf.

"He was convinced," he said, "that my stabbing a boy with my knife, because I could not beat him by fair

means, was no proof of my valour ; and at the same time lamented the infatuated affection which my mother bore me, and which made her construe every action of my life in the most favourable point of view, making an excuse for me where I could scarcely have imagined one for myself. She was, however, the only member of the family from whom my rebel heart regretted a separation. The example of some of my companions, who had before suffered the same punishment, could not inspire me with fortitude sufficient to take leave of her and Venice without emotions of the greatest grief, but of this, in the course of my story.

“ On being emancipated, the authority of the Abbé to whom my education had been entrusted, I got acquainted with some of the former pupils of my master, and among them I first learnt to display those talents which my mother prognosticated would, some time or other, prove the prop of Venice.

“ Among them, likewise, I learnt the use if not the value of money. You may conceive that my income, though large, would not satisfy the wants of such men as those with whom I associated. I was drawing continually upon my father, till at last his pliant spirit was roused, and he told me I should

have no more money till he had deducted sufficiently of my allowance to pay the numerous debts which I had contracted. This was, you may suppose, a death blow to my ardent and aspiring genius, as my mother termed it, and I secretly resolved not to abide by the decree.

“ I, accordingly, about three years after, my father (rather than the law) had made me my own master, sought a private conference with my mother, and suiting my face to the tale which I was about to relate, told her, I had come to see her for the last time; the harshness of my father had obliged me to leave her and Venice.

ITALIAN MARAUDERS.

" I anxiously watched the effect this address had upon her maternal feeling. They were sufficiently apparent, and such as I wished.

" Do not leave us," she cried, throwing her arms around my neck, " state your difficulties and they shall be remedied.

" This tenderness sensibly affected me; it procured me, however, a large supply, and I hastened back to my companions, flushed with success.— Many of them, from not being so liberally supplied as I was, had recourse to stratagem before. Congratulating me, therefore, upon my success, they assured me, at the same time, that this

supply was the more serviceable as the recent extravagances into which we had launched, had nearly exhausted all our finances. We again relapsed into all our former excesses. An incident, however, about this time occurred which completely deranged all my mother's plans, and eventually brought me to this place. Among my most particular acquaintance was my cousin, the young Alfred. We had together, with some of our companions, one evening engaged a gondola to convey us to ———. The excursion was a delightful one; but on our return we passed a boat of masks, who particularly attracted our attention. It was

composed chiefly of ladies apparently of the first rank, to some of whom Alfred was known, as they bowed to him as we passed them. A Diana, however, who was leaning against one of the poles which supported the canopy, particularly attracted my attention, I bowed in return for that she gave my cousin, and we shot a-head of the party and left them. The image of the fair Diana, however, haunted my imagination, as it likewise appeared to do that of my cousin. The rallying wit of my companions now appeared ribaldry, and I longed for the time when the colonades of the rialto would again appear, as that was to be the termination of our party.

“ We reached them at last, and to my great relief landed there. My friends left me as soon as we had satisfied the gondoliers, to my fate, as they termed it, for my reveries bespoke me, as they told me, irrevocably lost.

“ I smiled, but my heart told me they had more sagacity in the art of discovery than I passed in that of concealing. I passed two hours in anxious expectation on the rialto, ere the boat which contained the attraction appeared. At length, however, my longing eyes caught a sight of the gondolas, and I eagerly walked towards that part of the promenade from which I should soonest catch a sight of my lovely

Diana. Taking my station, therefore, behind one of the pillars, I anxiously awaited the moment of their landing, determining to join them as if by accident, and learn, if possible, the title and condition of my fair incognita. Seeing them take the path which led from the spot where I stood, I took a short cut towards them. What was my disappointment, however, at finding Alfred had joined them before me, and Diana was leaning familiarly upon his arm? His laugh convinced me that he was aware of his triumph, and from that moment I regarded him not as my relation, but as my enemy. He was not longer in expunging my name from the

list of his friends ; and from this period we as cordially hated each other, as if we had been rivals from our boyish days. Seeing her other arm, however, disengaged, I offered mine to her acceptance, which she willingly took. This condescension considerably abated my chagrin.

We were now joined by the rest of the party, who invited us to supper. I accepted the invitation with raptures, without waiting for a similar assent on the part of Alfred, who at first appeared undetermined. My movements have ever decided him, and he likewise agreed to the proposition. On arriving at the house of the Count di Valdo, I

soon discovered her to be the daughter of that old nobleman. But, alas! I soon discovered her heart was previously engaged to the young Marquis M—, though under the rose, and without the knowledge of her father. The Marquis, however, was banished the presence of his mistress, and knowing the effect which absence and another object sometimes have, I did not despair of supplanting him. But, alas! Alfred appeared to have the same wish. The penurious old Count, likewise, favoured his attention, and I retired, at length, less pleased with the conclusion of the excursion, and less in favour with myself than ever.

“I passed, as is usual with young lovers, a sleepless night; and I was parading the rialto by sun-rise, the next morning, in a state of the most restless inquietude. My thoughts, however, were all bent towards one point—the possession of Angela. My cousin took a corresponding resolution, and each determined to pursue the same course, at the same time.

“In conformity with my plan, I endeavoured to make an impression on the heart of Angela in favour of myself. My cousin, likewise, endeavoured to do the same in his own behalf, and we both were constant visitors, and sometimes we met.

“ Alfred, of an overbearing disposition, scouled on me, as chance thus threw us in each other’s way; till at length, open war was declared between us.

“ The object, however, of this deadly shift, was impenetrable to our assiduities ; her heart, she told me, in return for an explanation I had entered into with her father, was already engaged, and if obliged to accept the hand either of myself or my cousin, it would be without any inclination to do so.

“ I knew woman’s love, however, too well to be blinded by such a declaration. The merits of such a woman, whose merits, even reprobate as I was,

I could perceive, told me, if I got her hand, her respect, which I wisely took a resolution to merit, would soon follow, if not her regard. Opposition, therefore, but determined me still further to pursue the beloved object. My cousin, likewise, about this time, made the same overtures, and was informed that my application had preceded his, and that Angela was determined to reject both. This resolution he attributed to our rivalry, and his hatred towards me increased, I determined, however, in spite of cousins, and more successful rivals, to persevere. An incident, however, convinced me that my attempts were futile, and succeeding occurrences

even now tell me, that but for Diana in the gondolier, or but for Dianna at all, the family of the —— had still flourished. Rather, however, I should say, obstinacy on my part, and worse on that of my cousin, caused the downfall of both our ancient houses, and left the unfortunate future descendants of the families to pace the streets of Venice for subsistence.

“ Soon after my resolution to pursue the object of my wishes, and his to thwart me in my purpose, we were invited together to an aquatic fête, given by the old Count. It was during the festival of St. Mark, and all Venice was in an uproar. We repaired, however,

to the place appointed, and the whole party soon assembled; we were all masked. ~~Angela~~, however, tired of our joint pursuit, gave her arm to a mask, who represented an old monk; she was herself dressed as a nun, and they preceded the rest of the company, towards the gondola. My cousin was scarcely able to stand, so much had this prudent conduct in Angela affected him; he took off his mask, and I saw his eyes turned towards me reproachfully, with features pale as death.

“ We at length were all seated in the boat, and the waving seas, beating, as it were, responsively to the music which was performing, bore us from the noise and confusion of St. Mark.

“ At the rate we were proceeding, it was no difficult thing for us to reach the place of our destination, which was the Villa of the old Count, in three hours. It was the first time I had ever visited it. To examine, therefore, its various windings diverted me from dwelling upon the immediate cause of my chagrin. Not so, however, Alfred. He was the shadow of Angela; wherever she went, he followed her; and if the same seat would contain them, he was by her side. Not an encouraging glance, however, did he get in return. She was too prudent to raise hopes it would give her misery to realize; and too gentle absolutely to re-

gret services she could not but think obligingly tendered.

Towards midnight, however, I made my appearance in the pavilion to which they had retired, and there I still found Alfred by the side of Angela. A collation was upon the table, and we were now under the necessity of unmasking. Angela smiled, as I sarcastically offered to take her mask. Alfred gave me a look which at once proclaimed his hatred and malice, and his eyes seemed to challenge me with an air of something which I was resolved he should explain. My spirits, however, this evening, were particularly elated, and I returned his glance with all the expression I could.

throw into my face. This provoked him the worse. I stood in attitude for drawing my poignard, when Angela, anticipating our intentions, threw herself between us, and screamed for assistance. A party of men rushed between us, and Alfred for the present betook himself once more to his seat, and I retired to another part of the pavilion smiling, at this absurd rancour.

“The time at last was elapsed for our return to the city, and we prepared to depart. Alfred I permitted undisturbed to hand Angela to her seat in the gondola, and, in the interim, took my seat immediately beside her. The looks of Alfred, upon this movement, which I

did rather with the view of increasing his resentment, than of enjoying the company of Angela; for I plainly saw the impossibility of success, and but for the gratification which the boding looks of Alfred gave me, I would not have trusted myself near the Syren. I was equally convinced that he stood no better chance than myself, and was surprised at the delusion which he appeared to labour under.

“Upon our return, we each repaired immediately to our respective homes. He, for the purpose of writing, I for that of receiving a challenge, which I was convinced from his manner, during our return from the Villa, would be the consequence of our adventure.

“ I was not disappointed. The first dawn of morning brought me this note; I have preserved it ever since, as I have ever considered it the prelude to the misfortunes (for even now I term them), of the remainder of the period I am describing to you. I will read it; drawing one from his pocket-book, as he spoke:—

“ This is to inform you, that twelve o'clock this day risks you or I of a rival. We will meet near St. Mark's Church—a stiletto will be the only means which I shall employ.

“ Yours, &c.

“ ALFRED DE ———.”

“ I now for the first time saw the danger which a moment’s want of reflection had involved me in ; but this idea brought not that of retreating. Though convinced of the utter impossibility of either of us succeeding, I was resolved to abide the event, and felt perfectly indifferent as to the issue.

“ Those bare-headed Franciscans had never warned my mind with the idea of the purgatory which awaited me, and example had so far succeeded as to render me indifferent as to their assistance even in my dying hour. At breakfast, therefore, I bade my mother adieu with unusual earnestness, which alarmed the old lady, but she affected to believe me

when I assured her that there was no ground for her fears. At the appointed time, I repaired, muffled up, to church, having first secured the attendance of one of my companions at our midnight orges.

“On our arrival at the Church of St. Mark, we found Alfred already waiting for us, disfigured as well as ourselves.

“You have kept us waiting,” said he,” Angela, perhaps, has detained you.”

“I absolutely went there without any resentment against my cousin. I was convinced that it was possible for us both to live, and be both discarded by

continued my raillery till we arrived on the field."

"We will determine," said he, "a quarrel that your conduct has made necessary."

"And, perhaps," replied I, "I am perfectly willing to subscribe to the necessity of it."

"Take your choice of weapons," said he, as he threw his mantle from his shoulders.

"I did so," and we both took our respective stations. I began the defence.

"You look rather wild," exclaimed I—"the business, perhaps, may be new to you."

“Not quite so new, perhaps, as you may imagine; but you may have had more experience.”

“There is the fruits of it, then,” replied I, making a thrust.

“There’s the retort, then,” replied he, and I received the point in my arm.

“The pain occasioned by this wound rendered me furious. “Take the last lesson, then, you will ever receive,” said I, as I made a thrust, which succeeded but too well, for he fell lifeless on the ground.”

CHAPTER XIII.

Continuation of the Captain's Story.

“ I KNEW too well the strength of my arm and the depth of the wound, to suppose that he would survive the one I had given him. I therefore took a last view of the corse of my fallen relation, and quickly returned to Venice, together with my friend, in order to arrange plans for our immediate departure from the vicinity of that City.

“On my arrival at my father’s house, I introduced myself to my mother, and telling her, with as much apparent ease as I could assume, that an affair of consequence had taken place between Alfred and myself, I begged her to supply me with money for my immediate necessities. This she immediately did, comprehending, from my eagerness, the whole extent of the misfortune which had befallen me. I then bade her an eternal adieu; and joining my companion at a place previously agreed on, we left Venice ere the news of the death of my cousin arrived.

“We determined to bend our course towards Naples, hoping there, at least,

to secure a retreat which would shelter us from the prying eyes of justice, the utmost nerve of which would be resorted to, to discover us, at the instigation of my powerful uncle, whose influence and representations in the senate, would, I knew, be indefatigably exerted against us.

“ We reached the proposed place of our destination, in safety, and took obscure lodgings in the suburbs, determining to live upon our wits, as the necessity of our entire concealment prevented letters to Venice. This, in a city like Naples, is the easiest thing in the world. We became enrolled among sharpers and robbers of a more open

description. Our gang, which was very extensive, consisted of three divisions. The first, and by far the largest, was distributed through the houses of the great; and either served as bullies to their mistresses, or avengers of their masters' wrongs.—That is to say, they challenged those who affronted their employer, and without giving them an opportunity of defending themselves, chose some narrow street and dark night for the execution of their plan. A second consisted of a few who simply robbed those who appeared worth stopping. The third (among whom I was at first placed) generally executed the

lawful avocation of the gang, such as buying, selling, and the like.

“ From this menial office, as they term this part of the business, I was quickly raised. An incident which bespoke my future greatness, gave rise to the promotion.

“ I had been selling the rich spoils of diamonds and other valuables, taken from a Jew, who was quitting Naples at the time we robbed him, and was returning leisurely towards the place of our rendezvous, when, by the light of a large lamp, I saw a reverend father returning to his sacred retreat. I guessed he had been collecting his holy portion of the best fruits, and was determined not to let such an opportunity

slip. Seizing him, therefore, by the cowl, I ordered him immediately to deliver the contents of his pocket to me.

“My son,” began the old man, “if you deprive me of these offerings to piety, fifty masses will be insufficient to rescue your soul from purgatory.”

“Then sixty will suffice,” replied I, —“give me your money in order that I may pay for them.”

“Fifteen masses,” continued the old rogue, “are sufficient for the repose of the soul of a good man. Let me retain the money, and I will offer up the prayers of the whole brotherhood in your behalf.”

"Do not detain me longer," replied I, in a peremptory tone, and holding him still faster by the cowl, "deliver, I say, or I will send you to the purgatory you merit, without masses."

"He reluctantly drew the loved beard from beneath his garment."

"All!" I exclaimed, in a tone that made the tuft of hair which was all superstition would allow on his nearly bare head, stand erect.

"He drew another heavy bag from beneath his garment.

"All," I again repeated, in an accent still more terrifying?

The hoary hypocrite with even increased reluctance, presented me with

his list parcel, which contained, as I afterwards discovered on opening it, baubles to a greater amount than were both the other bags which I had taken from him. He was tottering off.

“Stay,” cried I, “let me secure five minutes secrecy, or all Naples will be acquainted with your misfortunes ere ten are expired.”

He silently submitted, and I bound him to a post near which we were standing, and made off, threatening him if he attempted to raise an alarm, that I would return, and instantly put an end to his existence. I retired watching him as I did so, and soon reached the place of my destination.

“ When I submitted an account of my movement to the rest of the troop, and produced the money which I had contrived to rid the priest of, the tokens of approbation I received I shall never forget. The general voice called me to fill a situation which was then vacant. It was that of confidential friend to the Marquis de ———. This proposition was the more agreeable to me, as I had, since my exile, regretted those pleasures and that magnificence which my own imprudence had robbed me of, and I guessed that this situation, would, in some measure, compensate for loss which I had sustained. I was not mistaken.

“ Upon being appointed to the situation, I was introduced to the family of my patron under an assumed title. You need not suppose I wanted money. Priests and travelling jews amply supplied me, and the salary which my friend, the Marquis, allowed, was paid into the funds of the troop.

“ I passed the first twelvemonths of my new capacity in inactivity; idleness, however, was not my wish. I devoted my leisure time to collecting the heaviest purses on the road, and in seeking new mistresses for my employer. Another scene, however, was soon to open to me, I mean my entrance into his troop. The circumstances which lead to it I will relate.

“ Among the many ladies whom my master, in course of time, had had collected, was one who was his favourite. Her name was Grinilda. This lady, previously to her connexion with my patron, had had many candidates for the gift of her affections; his proposals, however, were successful, and she became his adored in consequence.

“ Many rivals, however, disputed the possession. Among others, the young cavalier de — was the foremost. Him, therefore, I was commanded to keep my eye upon, and if possible, effectually prevent him ever gaining an ascendancy in the bosom of Grinilda. I well understood the

meaning of this charge, but conscience, at first, whispered murder. Hints of this kind, however, I quickly silenced by whispering in return—wealth. A retrospect of my former situation, however, shewed the futility of my present pursuits, and I involuntarily turned from the thought that I had ceased to be a nobleman in Venice, to become a murderer in Naples. But necessity, at first, obliged me to smother suggestions of this description; and habit, at length, completely enabled me to disregard them. The time arrived however which was to put my qualms to the test; my patron opened his hotel to all masks, and among others whom

we knew, notwithstanding their disguise, was the young cavalier his rival. We together rejoiced at the opportunity which was offered us, and I determined on quarrelling with him in the ball room, and induce him to fight. This plan was no sooner conceived than put in execution. He was disguised as a monk, I as a Hercules. Repairing therefore to the place where the supposed holy father stood, I purposely drew my club across his foot: he turned, and by the inclination of his face, I imagined he fixed his eyes upon me, but he did not utter a word, I likewise directed mine towards his face. By accident my mask falling off discovered

the whole of my countenance to him; when to my surprise and dismay the holy man dropped his from his features, and discovered to me the identical ones of the monks, with whose cash I had made free fourteen months before.

“Oh! Amphale, Amphale!” I exclaimed, laughing, “do we in reality see a holy father at a masked ball?”

He fixed his dark penetrating glances full upon me. In vain I tried to move from the spot. The glare of his eyes which I fancied reflected a scaffold, rivetted me to it, and I stood like one under the influence of a rattle snake. Still he spoke not. His silence argued evil. I at length moved.

"We meet again," he exclaimed, as I left him.

"Not in this world, I hope," returned I, "and you will not be prosecutor in the next."

I returned to my room, and immediately changed my whole appearance; I left the Monks as Hercules and rejoined them an Hector; my helmet which I wore, with the vizor down, completely concealed my face. No one who knew me as Hercules, could recognise me as the Trojan hero. My mistake with regard to the monk and the young count, made me cautious as to again addressing any mask with whose real character I was unacquainted. I there-

fore took my station among a group of cavaliers, among whom were two masks disguised as Achilles and Patroclus; with Achilles I drew my sword, and Patroclus made (in jest,) a thrust at me.

“ I shall leave the task of avenging one, if I should fall, to my friend Achilles,” cried Patroclus, in a voice I immediately recognised for that of my intended victim the young count. I would have turned the jest into reality, but that my recent mistake made me cautious, and parrying the thrusts of Patroclus, I left the party. Joining another, I found the subject of conversation was the appearance of myself and Patroclus.

“Rejoiced at this symptom, I pursued my object. “Your avenging friend looks too terrible; I would not encounter his hate, unless, indeed, like him, I could be immersed in the Styx..

“Achilles laughed.

“The ire of Patroclus increased—
“We will retire,” said he to his companion.”

“I, lounging, took his arm, and we proceeded towards the door together.

“This conduct is not bearable, Sir,” exclaimed he, abandoning the arm which I had thrust through his—“your absence would be preferred to your company.”—

“And your silence to your imper-

tinence," replied I, laying my hand upon my sword.

"The count will find his match in Hector, if appearances are to be believed," cried one.

"That is not often the case," returned another mask close beside me, though ignorant of our vicinity; "he has the credit of carrying every thing by storm, though I understand, with regard to the affair of the marquis's lady, he intends to wait a regular siege."

"Unless," whispered I to myself, "I oblige him to leave it." I now left them, and again joined Achilles and his friend; confirmed as my conjectures had been, I determined not to let him slip me.

"Old Pianza should be here," ex-

claimed Achilles, as I joined them.
“ Achind, his son, wants a director rather than an antagonist—he seems restless—where is he now ?”

“ Here !” I exclaimed, giving him a smart tap on the shoulder.

“ He turned round, and laying his hand on his sword, “ your friend,” continued I, laughing, “ has not rehearsed his part yet ; you are taking his place and he is not dead you see.” I put my iron hand upon the armour of Patroclus, and spoke the last word with peculiar emphasis.

“ I am prepared to act it, if I have not rehearsed it, though ;” retorted he angrily.

This action appeared like a shock of electricity upon the unfortunate Patroclus; he drew his weapon, however, firmly, but ere any one could interpose mine was buried in his heart: I was immediately seized by twenty masks, and mine tore from my face.

“ A robber and a murderer !” I heard the old monk exclaim, as I was borne from the apartment by at least twenty Neapolitan gentlemen, and given into the custody of the officers in waiting.

By these men I was dragged to a most loathsome dungeon, and thrown upon some straw which had graced a corner of it a year at least. When I

heard the heavy bolts of the door enclosing me from liberty and the world, I had full time for reflection. This, however, could never long be an inhabitant of my bosom, and, except upon the means of escape I do not think I ever entertained, even for a moment, any other during my confinement.

The place in which I was imprisoned did not admit the rays of the sun, except through a very small aperture which time, together with the assistance of some of my predecessors in misery, had worn in it. I was determined however to attempt an enlargement that way as soon as the gaoler, whom I expected by day break, should have

supplied me with my daily allowance ; he came at the usual time, and having deposited it in my miserable apartment, I began immediately the business of enlarging myself.

By means of a large nail which I drew from the wall of the place, I continued to loosen the mortar from around a large stone, and as soon as I sufficiently reduced it, I drew it from its place, and placing it against the den, I repeated my efforts with the greatest prospect of success ; a second yielded almost immediately, and I likewise placed that with the other, as I by that means should secure the door

against intrusion, for some time at least, after I had made my escape.

I at length accomplished a breach in the wall sufficiently large to admit my standing in it, and there now remained only one stone which it was necessary to remove ere my enlargement could be effected. This removal, however, I postponed till evening, lest some one observing the cavity on the outside, should lead to a premature discovery. At length, however, night threw her black veil over the face of nature, and as if favourable to my design, it was particularly dark, I therefore began to remove the only impediment to emancipation, and soon accomplished my purpose.

With what anxiety did I prepare to take a view of the height of the place from which I was destined to leap. I looked through the aperture, and found that I was not above three yards from the earth; eagerly did I crawl through the hole, and dropping on the ground beneath, ran off as fast as my legs would carry me. My Hector dress, which the persons who seized me would not allow me the opportunity of exchanging, I still wore, and I was obliged to avoid the public road in order to evade being observed.

I walked in one direction till day-break, when, reaching a small village, I requested the owner of the first cottage to give me a suit of their cloaths,

At the first sight of me they thought I had either been mad, or what the superstitious peasantry dread more—a supernatural being. I soon, however, quietted their fears as to my ghostship or madness by shewing them my purse, desiring them to use promptitude.

The sight of this, without any charge, was sufficient. I was supplied immediately with every thing which could contribute to my disguise; a suit of clothes, which the master of the house told me were those which he usually wore himself on a Sunday. I hastily attired myself, and liberally rewarding the good people I left them, taking the armour of Hector, which was of silk, with me.

“ Three days I travelled without intermission, when, almost ready to drop, and still dreading pursuit, I was solicited to join this company by old Bernado, who brought me hither.

“ I have now given you, gentlemen, the particulars of a life which has been marked with as great a variety of incidents, I will venture to assert, as that of any among you. The only one painfully recollected, is my parting from my mother. There, indeed, I felt a pang, which has never been removed since that moment. I could part from life sooner than part again from her under such circumstances. Would I had parted with life

with the generous, though mistaken, Alfred. What pangs should I not have been spared. This letter (taking one from his pocket) I received some time since, from one who was formerly a member of our corps, but who is now an Abbé in Venice. It explains the series of misfortunes which befel my family after my departure for Naples. I will read it:—

“SIGNOR—I am under the painful necessity of informing you, by your own desire, of the reverses which your family have sustained since you left them for Naples. Your enraged uncle has persevered in the ruin of your family, from the moment he commenced

persecuting it. By his interest your father was dismissed his offices in the state, and by degrees deprived of every thing which could have rendered his existence comfortable. He was obliged to dispose of his chateau two years after you left it. A lawsuit which your uncle commenced against him, though it did not succeed, robbed him of all his ready money, and at the expiration of the fourth year, he was penniless, and, of course, friendless. The sudden reverse of fortune broke his heart, and he died. Your mother is insane, and under the care of a person whom I took upon myself to appoint. She is continually raving about you, and her la-

mentation would pierce a heart of stone, which, though circumstances are against you, I am sure yours is not. In my new capacity, I must give you a piece of advice—respect the holy establishment of the church, of which is a member—

“L'ABBE DE FONTNAY.”

“Lead six of us to the house of this wretch,” cried one of the troop, and we will level it with the ground.”

“We will avenge you,” cried the whole troop;—“lead us to Venice!”

“Thank you, my brave associates; I will trust my cause to you; but I would rather employ the dagger than

open warfare—there may be danger in the attempt.”

“Leave danger to the reflecting fools who lose a cause in attempting to avoid it,” cried an old robber,—“I would I were this instant opposite the hotel, ere midnight it should be levelled to the earth, I promise you, and I with it, rather than it should not be so. The wretch who would thus persecute a whole family to destruction for the errors of one individual composing it, does not deserve to live. Even now I feel my blood burn to be revenged on such a villain, and how weak must that government be which can pass over such deeds, and tell the deluded world—it is

the law. I would have Nero to make laws, and Caligula to execute them, but such acting should be prevented."

"Give me Carlo's skull," cried Paulo, seizing it as he spoke—"I will drink as much Burgundy to the death of this villain as would drown him."

"We will all drink the downfall of tyranny and oppression," cried Michielo, seizing his goblet, "in a bumper."

It was given universally. He smiled at the success of his manœuvres.

"To the destruction of the Chateau, and the downfall of that wretch the Count de —," cried Michielo, again seizing his glass.

It was drunk with renewed enthusiasm. Turning towards Angela, he offered her the glass. The expression of his face denoted his real intent. Pleading an head-ache, she requested permission to retire. The Captain applied to the stranger for his look ; an assenting one was given, and Anna summoned to conduct her to her chamber.

CHAPTER XIV.

"WHAT could be their motive!" cried Anna, as they entered the lower apartment, "for thus having you present at their noisy assembly?"

"I really cannot conjecture;" returned Angela—"but I shall retire immediately. I am indisposed. Their ridiculous and boisterous mirth has given me a most violent head-ache."

"Good night, then," cried Anna.

Angela repeated the salutation emphatically; and the attendant retired.

“Oh! Heaven”—exclaimed Angela, as the retreating footsteps of her attendant could no longer be heard in the gallery, and all the castle appeared hushed in silence—“let me but reach Venice again, and Valerio and liberty are mine. Ah! Valerio—Where, at this moment art thou?—Perhaps, even now, thou art passing a sleepless night beneath the craggy projection of an enormous rock, recollecting only happiness and me. Or, perhaps, thou art blessed as love and riches can make thee, with a less unhappy bride than thou wouldst find in Angela di Montgolfi.

But it requires more firmness to support the idea, than I have strength for the reality. But let me banish the thought ; and when I am Valerio's—if the blissful moment should ever arrive, I will tell him the thoughts this wayward heart entertained to the injury of his faith. But shall I ever reach him—shall I ever behold a friend again!—Let me not despair ! This night determines—but I must teach my heart indifference as to the event. Should it be favourable—oh ! Heaven—what agony is this uncertainty—should we fail, or these spurious hopes prove false—I am for ever undone. Death will then be my only refuge, and the grave my only

hope. I must, however, meet each sad reverse with calmness, and come what may, I will be prepared for the most trying."

Having prepared every thing, she seated herself in the lower apartment, and anxiously awaited the moment which was to take her to Venice, or immure her in a dungeon. That moment, big with impending events, at length arrived. With a palpitating heart did she attend to the preconcerted signal, and replying to it, Michielo entered.


"Signora," said he, as he did so—the moment is favourable. We leave this castle and this island for ever, ere to-morrow's sun dawn across the eastern hill."

“How much shall I owe you?” replied Angela—“a life of gratitude cannot repay it!”

“Do not talk of gratitude,” returned Michiolo—“till I deserve your regards, I will not exact it.”

She then cautiously ascended the stairs, followed by her companion, taking up her small packet, which she had deposited on them by the way. When they reached the turret Michiolo took the lead, and desiring Angela to follow him closely, made towards the door which she had before noticed in the tower.

“Now!” exclaimed Michiolo, as he prepared to descend, and drawing a



lanthorn having a concealed light within it, from his pocket as he spoke—
“We shall be at liberty in less than three minutes!”

They began slowly to descend the narrow staircase. Its sides were covered with slime, and the damp and turpid air which Angela inhaled, nearly suspended her faculties.

“Courage!” cried Michielo, in a low voice—“we are near an outlet.”—
A sudden gust of fresh air confirmed this idea, and Angela felt a re-animating sensation creep through her veins.

“Are we near the bottom yet,” cried she, in a tone scarcely amounting to a whisper.

“We have a few more stairs to de-

scend," returned Michielo—"you must bear your courage up till we reach the termination of this circular journey of ours."

In vain Angela every moment expected Michielo would announce them at the bottom. Her wishes for it were in vain. They continued descending by stairs which ran round the narrow precincts of the turret, till Angela became at length convinced they must be below the surface of the earth. She dreaded disclosing her fears to Michielo. If they were just, she would be subjecting herself to his sarcasms:—if not so, it would be insulting him by her suspicions. They reached, at length,

the termination of their winding route, when their progress was interrupted by an iron door. Angela's heart sank within her when she perceived it yielded not to the first pressure of Michielo's hand. He, however, threw himself upon the ground, and applying his ear to the bottom of the door,

"There is not any one in the caverns," exclaimed he rising again, and to the great relief of Angela, drawing a key from his pocket, "we will venture to proceed, this key is common to every one, and therefore its being missing will create no suspicion."

He unlocked the door, and bidding Angela precede him, he re-locked it,

and placing the key in a concealed niche by the side, they proceeded forward through an arch-way scarcely high enough for Michielo to walk erect.

They had reached the furthest extremity, when the friendly bandit lifting up a trap door, they descended some stone steps which led into a kind of dungeon or subterranean passage the most gloomy that can be conceived."

"We will ~~fasten~~ this entrance to the shades of night," said he, "and that will, at least retard the pursuit. They have no other outlet from the castle to the island, except through the means we have pursued."

“Thank heavens,” exclaimed Angela, “but when shall we emerge from these wretched caverns?”

“When we reach the extremity of this, we open the last door,” replied Michielo.

With tottering steps she walked towards the place to which he pointed. Her apprehensions increased as she proceeded. The robber at length, preceding her, they began to ascend a narrow staircase, resembling that which they had before descended.

“We can emancipate ourselves at last,” exclaimed Michielo, striking with his foot against a small shutter, apparently concealing a window. It

sank into the wall, and the fresh air blew full in the face of Angela. She imagined the blast, though tempestuous, particularly reviving, and taking the offered arm of Michielo, she stepped through the opening upon the turf, with a heart lighter than it had been many preceding weary hours.

“ He turned, however, to replace the sunken pannel in its former situation, which having accomplished, he bade Angela take a last view of the edifice, so late the sepulchre of her hopes. Visions of happiness danced o’er her mind as she took a last view of its grey walls, and mouldering battlements, lighted by the pale

beams of a moon, whose lustre was every moment obscured by envious clouds.

“We must away though,” cried Michielo, leading her from the spot; “it will be well if we reach our place of destination in safety; there appears to be a storm gathering in the atmosphere, which will be by no means a pleasant accompaniment, should we have to encounter it on our way.”


“Heaven forbid,” returned Angela, quickening her pace, and looking with dismay on the black clouds which appeared to be collecting around—“we shall never discover the boat should the moon be obscured.”

“ We must, at least, make the attempt,” returned her companion ;
“ perhaps the lightning may be of some assistance to us.”

“ How far have we to walk ?” said Angela, as her apprehensions increased.

“ A short, but very intricate path leads us to the spot,” returned Michiolo, “ but I have no doubt as to the final success of my plan. My spirits are buoyant. I am now for the first time these eighteen years in favour with myself.”

“ My gratitude,” returned Angela,
“ you can forever claim ; but can you not inform me of the name of my persecutor ?”



“Not till you are in safety; and he pleading for mercy at your feet, will you know his name; till then ignorance of it will be the most consoling to yourself, and least hazardous to me.”

“Let us hasten,” exclaimed Angela, “to the shore.”

“Not till the lightning’s glare points out a path to our feet, can we proceed,” returned Michielo, cautiously continuing his way.

There was indeed need of caution. The moon was entirely hid by clouds, black as the deepest shades of night could make them; and their road lay across a track, the apparent barrenness of which bespoke it exposed to the

most intense heat, and the most destructive blasts.

"Heaven preserve us," exclaimed Angela, as a glare of forked lightning, at that instant shooting across the path, disclosed her situation in its full variety of horrors.

"Preserve your courage," exclaimed Michielo, "or we shall not reach the place of appointment ere the torrents from the hills overwhelm us."

She endeavoured to recover her fortitude, but each succeeding burst of thunder dispelled every spark of animation, till it was only the strength and perseverance of Michielo that kept her from sinking to the earth.

"We are near the termination of our horrid peregrination," exclaimed he, in the hope of dispelling the terror which had overcome his companion.

"Let us hasten to it then," she exclaimed, for a moment dispelling the load of anxiety and terror which weighed down her small portion of spirits.

"We cannot get aboard the small pinnace till the storm has in some degree subsided," continued Michielo, in the hope that conversation might prevent a too intense reflection on the horrors of her present situation.

"Oh! when will it subside?" she exclaimed, as though awakening from a dream, "can you tell?"

"It must, in the course of nature, be near a conclusion," continued Michielo.

"Nature has reversed her laws against me, ere now," returned Angela, as though ignorant of the import of her words; "and will she still the tempest, or bid the lucid lightening cease to flash, because my head is defenceless? When my father left me all nature deserted me."

Michielo could scarcely restrain the anguish of his heart, on hearing her so pathetically pronounce these accents of despair. "Reflect not on the dispensations of that Providence whom I have so lately learnt, from your example, to revere," returned Michielo.

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Angela, as though awakening at the sounds from a deep and soul-absorbing reverie, "What then did I say?"

"Treason against heaven," continued Michielo, aware that he had discovered the touchstone to her feelings, and determining to draw them from their present point. "You said the dispensations of Providence were not just."

"Give me strength, oh, Heaven! to recall the expression," she exclaimed, her returning senses catching the import of his words.

"Bear up your fortitude," cried Michielo, leading her towards the shore. She heard the rushing of waves, as

they lashed the base of the rocks, and retired, apparently alarmed lest the monstrous pieces which overtaking them, should sink upon such feeble assaulters.

“ You must retire into one of these caverns. I will find my colleagues ere a minute elapses. Do not give way to your melancholy ideas. Support yourself till my return, and you will have no further occasion for the exercise of your fortitude.”

So saying, he left her, and continued calling as he proceeded along the beach.

The thunder still howled, and the lightening still glared with unabated fury. The re-echoing cavern increased the horrors of the former; and the

double reflections of the latter, as it illumined the surface of the deep, rendered its dreadful whirlings visible, and for a moment disclosed the horrors of the wild scene around. At length, however, Michielo returned.

“ I have been unsuccessful in my first effort;” he exclaimed, as he entered the cavern, “ I will now bend my steps in an opposite direction; he has not landed however, on the sands to the left—the right remains to be examined.”

“ Haste then, and let me know the worst;” returned Angela, “ my bosom harbours a sad boding thought.”

“ I will immediately away,” continued Michielo, “ but let me entreat

you to summon your strength and courage. Despair, even now, may frustrate all our schemes."

Angela promised to do so, and he again left her. She paced the cavern in hopes that exercise would dispel the reflections which she indulged, in spite of herself, on her situation. She began to think the second search of Michielo longer than the first, and had ventured near the mouth of the cavern, in the hopes of seeing him return successful, when a sudden flash of lightning darting across her feet, disclosed a dagger apparently new wet with gore.

The lightning, however, false to its apparent promise, deserted her, ere she


could gain the object which it had pointed out. She determined, however, on remaining near the spot, till a second one should permit her accomplishing the object.

A long period elapsed ere another glance illumined the cavern. She was prepared, however, and stooping, seized the handle of the stiletto. To this she discovered something pendant, fastened by a ribbon; it appeared to be a portrait case. This she deposited in her bosom, and concealing the dagger beneath the folds of her mantle, anxiously awaited the second return of Michielo.

She heard, at length, what she con-

ceived to be the sound of a human voice.—Its nearer approach, to her indescribable anguish, convinced her it was not that of her friend. Nearly dead with apprehension, she retired farther into the cavern.

“I tell you,” exclaimed one, in a tone with which she was unacquainted, “they overcame every one who endeavoured to oppose their retreat. I heard the clashing of their swords, as I was returning from the pursuit:—that one who pretended blindness was no more blind than I am; we have him, however; the other two certainly have escaped.—Michielo must answer for it.”



“ He too was not to be found when I left the castle ;” returned another voice, with which she was likewise unacquainted. “ We will have them all ere we decline the search ; they cannot have left the island—such a night too ; the remainder of the speech was lost in distance.

She was involved in ruminations on the purport of this speech, when the voice of Michielo near her, bade her follow him. Convinced as she was of the necessity of persevering, she summoned all her remaining strength to her assistance, and walked firmly by his side.

“ We are betrayed !” exclaimed he, “ have you not heard any thing ?”

Angela explained.

“ One has escaped.—Then you are safe—for myself I care little. It is necessary, however, to our own safety, that we should proceed;” so saying he seized her arm, and led her from the cavern..

They again retraced their former path upon the beach, and, turning a sharp angle, began a retreat into the interior of the island. The storm still raged doubly gloomy and terrific, and the hollow roaring of the waves almost rivalled the still more re-echoing peals of thunder ! The agony of fear, which Angela had before endured, began again to revive.

“ When will my relentless fate cease

persecuting me?" exclaimed Angela, as she tottered over the plain, "would I were beside thee, my father! then, indeed, I might find repose. With thee only can I hope for rest or peace—both fled with thee."

"We must regard," returned Michiolo, "every incident as the best which the necessary order of things could produce. Support, therefore, the burthens which you are obliged to bear, as incidents, the completion of which is of more consequence to the majority of mankind, than an attention to the little interests of a few, though their impotent calls may attempt to drown the voice of the mercy. I am quite

a philosopher, within these two days, and begin to wonder that the mist has so long stood before my eyes, which prevented my distinguishing between the paths of virtue, and the more beaten one of vice."

Michielo had said thus much with the idea of provoking an answer from Angela, and by that means divert her from reflecting on the more immediate calamities of their situation—a relief, from which he had began, himself, to doubt, when a flash, which for some moments illumined the whole place, discovered to them a cavern, near the mouth of which they stood. The rain, which now began to descend in tor-

rents, rendered their further progress almost impossible, and they entered it.

Having drawn the lanthorn from his pocket, which he had before provided himself with, he cast a cursory glance around the place, when, to the great relief of Angela, they discovered a large stone near the middle; upon which she immediately seated herself.

“ We have them,” exclaimed a voice very near them, which Angela, though nearly senseless, recognised for that of Paulo; “ there is no longer any thing to fear from them.” Michielo, tremblingly, took the arm of Angela within his, and drew her towards the mouth of the cavern.

" You must, said he, endeavour to return ; but my death is inevitable."

" Fly!" exclaimed Angela eagerly ;
" I must insist you fly immediately. Morning perhaps may be more propitious."

A light issuing from the mouth of the cavern, announced robbers in pursuit of them.

" Michielo a traitor!" exclaimed Paulo, fronting him, " die!" drawing his sword as he spoke, around the blade of which, the lightning, at that moment, disclosing the whole scene to their view, seemed to play. Michielo made a thrust, and fell lifeless on the earth.

" Murderers!" exclaimed Angela.

At that moment all sense of her situation leaving her, she would have fallen as motionless beside him, but for a robber, who, at that moment, reached the spot, and caught her in his arms.

CHAPTER XV.

UPON her recovery she found herself in the cavern, wherein Michielo and herself had before in vain endeavoured to find an asylum. She was supported by the stone in the middle of the recess, and attended by two robbers, who, however, had fallen asleep on the earth. She arose, and by degrees comprehended the whole extent of the failure

which led to the present scene. Finding the senses of the villains who were left to guard her, had completely left them, she descended from her hard couch, and determined, if possible, to discover the fate of her late companion. Taking the lanthorn from the ground, she went to the mouth of the recess, and she found him not dead with wounds, but a corse by the lightning. She could now account for his sudden fall without defending either himself or her. That his sword had attracted the lightning when he drew it to encounter Paulo, she had no doubt; and she almost considered it fortunate, that he had thus found his fate. The arriving

of the robbers, would, she knew, have inflicted the most cruel torments on him, and the malice of his enemies would not have been appeased even with his death. Now, however, fate had placed him for ever beyond their vengeance; and this idea, amidst the many that alternately rose to her view of a contrary tendency, gave her some consolation.

The storm, which had she conceived, been the cause of the failure of the expedition, had ceased, and the ruddy tints of the morning began to chase the vapours which hung on the adjacent hills; by degrees the radiant beams of the sun dispelled the unwholesome

mists, and she could discern the turrets of her prison again in the distance.

“Alas !” she exclaimed, “how futile are the most promising efforts on the part of weak humanity to free itself from calamity. The most subtle calculations are void. Scarcely have we arranged a plan to draw ourselves from oppression, ere we find all the insufficiency of our natures, and shrink aghast at the prospect of the gulph into which we have been preparing to plunge ;—but,” she continued, looking towards the castle, “I could almost entertain the impious wish that the lightnings fatal flash had extended to me, and I then had not needed a

second attempt at deliverance. It would have been kind in fate to have ended her persecutions at a blow, and have deprived me of life and misery together. But I trespass the injunctions of thee, my father, by these impious repinings—I will be calm !

A rustling within the cavern bespoke some one of its inmates stirring ; she hastened into it, therefore, and seating herself on the stone again, waited the further orders of her gaolers.

The footsteps of a large party without now attracted her attention. They presently entered, bringing with them the younger of the musicians, who had played in the hall on the preceding evening.

"We are undone," exclaimed Pietro as he entered, "it is pretty certain there is no one place in the whole island in which he could have concealed himself, that we have not searched."

"If you have spent time in seeking for him, it has been in vain indeed: he left the shore in the face of the whole troop," replied Paulo.

"But he was a traitor," exclaimed another robber, slapping the young minstrel on the shoulder, and grinning sarcastically in his face, as he spoke, "to leave you hollowing after him on the beach."

"There you are out," returned

another Bandit, "our Captain had prevented his hollowing—he was making experiments with his teeth on the stones which covered the beach, when his companion, dexterously, I must confess, eluded our swords."

"It was an error in judgment, certainly," continued another.

"Or rather an instance of consummate judgment, I think, on his part," exclaimed a third, "if he had waited for young scrape-all here, we should, once again, have accommodated them with lodgings.

"E'er many days have elapsed, we must find another lodging for ourselves, and them too, or our friend the Dey

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masked and habited as before, and leaning on the arm of the Captain of the troop, apparently in earnest conversation. At the sight of Angela, he appeared agitated in the extreme, and motioning to his companion, desired, as she supposed, an explanation of the scene before him.

“ There appears to have been,” replied the chief, “ a well laid plan of escape, in which only one has succeeded. If he reached the opposite shore during such a night as this, he deserves the liberty which he has run so much risk in obtaining.”

“ I do not see things in so favourable a light,” replied Pietro, “ but we had better return to the Castle.”

The masked stranger seized Angela by the arm, as if to draw her from the cavern.

“Villain, desist,” exclaimed the young minstrel, in a voice of thunder, and in accents which bespoke Valerio to the soul of Angela. “I know you ; justice will o’er take you ere your schemes are complete. Let me strike that disguise from your face, and appear the native villain I know you to be. I am acquainted with your crimes. Do not flatter yourself they will go unpunished.”

The mask apparently grew furious with rage and terror. He drew his sword.—Valerio likewise did so.

“ Oh, heavens !” exclaimed Angela, throwing herself at the feet of her lover, “ desist.”

The stranger deposited his sword in its scabbard. Valerio caught his beloved Angela to his breast ; “ it is thus we meet, and yet we part again.”

“ Alas ! we do !” exclaimed Angela, after a pause, during which the actions of her soul appeared suspended, “ but we meet once more, at least in a world where the ruthless arm of persecution ne’er invades.”

“ But we must return,” exclaimed the Captain, seizing the arm of Angela, and attempting to separate the lovers. The stranger followed this

example, and seizing the other, drew it under his. A party, after a struggle, secured Valerio, who had now thrown off his disguise, and appeared the Italian Count, and were dragging, rather than leading him after them.

As they passed the mouth of the cavern, the stretched body of Michielo caught their attention.

“This,” exclaimed the robber, pointing to the defenceless corse at his feet, “is the fate of the first traitor, an example to those, who, in future, may wish to turn knight errants, and to deliver damsels from seclusion.”

“He shall not have regular burial,” returned the Captain. “We will dig

a hole in the clay near this spot, and throw in his corse. Not a ceremony shall be observed over him. His intention was too manifest."

"That his intention was to betray us there is little doubt," returned another robber. "I am afraid lest his plans have already succeeded too well for our safety. Would he were alive, and we would rack from him the extent of the mischief which his knavish plans will perhaps bring upon us. The chance, however, the pretended minstrel survives such a sea as that we have had in a small boat, are three to one. In a few hours, perhaps, we may have his corse, which will be as much as we want of him."

“ Wretches,” said Angela, mentally, “ it is doubtless all your wish of him. Pray heaven you may not have the fulfilment of your diabolical wish. Should it be so, hope would indeed be lost. Well may your guilty souls feel alarmed at a prospect of the discovery of your enormities, and shrink at the idea of punishment. Crimes like those will not meet the light without retribution. Justice being demanded against them.”

“ We will preclude the possibility of a second attempt of this nature,” said the Captain, in a voice that made Angela tremble. “ The lowest dungeon beneath the hall shall be their

prisons, and may the waves bury the fugitive deep as my curses would sink him."

"There would be no fear of his rising then, I think, Captain," said Pietro, laughing.

"Not if prayers and curses would keep him down,"—returned he, "he should have them alternately. We must, however, be prepared for the worst."

The spirits of Angela nearly sunk into inanimation at these words. She cast many scrutinising glances at Valerio, in order, if possible, to discover a ray of consolation in his countenance. None, however, was to be traced, all appeared dark forebodings, and gloomy apprehensions.

His glances were directed towards his companion, the mask, with an apparently ill-concealed determination of revenge. She trembled lest the strength of his passion should lead him into some dreadful act that would provoke the rage of the troop. In that case she well knew his life would be the forfeit. Every succeeding glance encreased her apprehensions, till they once more reached the castle.

“We will lead you,” exclaimed the Captain, “through this convenient door,” pointing to the small one through which they had escaped, “you did not estimate the chances of your returning again through it, when you quitted it some hours since.”

He gave a violent blow with his foot against the outer partition. A voice within demanded the occasion, he repeated his blow, and it sunk as before. Angela now discovered a second and stronger one on the inside, which she had not discerned on her escape through it. This the Captain ordered to be fastened, and the key brought to him.

"Come, young Gentleman," cried one of the troop, as they thrust Valerio through the aperture, "you must arrange your notes to another tune. The fish will stop your partners throat."

They were now once again facing the gloomy dungeons of the castle;

but Angela soon discovered that they were not pursuing the same route which led from her late apartments. This was a confirmation of her worst fears, and of the Captain's threat.

They had descended the stairs which led from the turret into the lower range of dungeons, formerly used for confining prisoners of war, and had passed two or three low arched passages, when they were suddenly ordered to stop.

"This, Madam," exclaimed he, "is your prison in future. Do not indulge any hopes of escape, that is now impossible; at least I shall render it so."

"We will not part thus," exclaimed Valerio, rushing from his detainers,

and catching Angela in his arms—you do not part us alive. Wretch! assassin!”—cried he, addressing the Mask, “you shall die!”

He wrested a sword from the Captain of the troop, as he spoke, and made a thrust at the object of his fury, who drew his sword, and parried the thrust.

“We must tame this gentleman,”—cried the whole band, rushing at the youth. He supported Angela with one arm, and defended himself against their united efforts with the other—but superior numbers overpowered him, and he fell, covered with blood.

“Oh! Valerio—” exclaimed Angela,

falling senseless on the pale form of the youth at her feet.

“ Move them hence !” exclaimed the Captain—“ I will not be turned from my purpose by those *heroic* acts of love and fortitude.”

Some robbers, at the command of their leader, bore Angela on their shoulders from the spot, and conveyed her into the narrow dungeon that was destined to be her future chamber.

“ Get her allowance of bread and water,” cried the Captain—“ we will bring her back to life, with part of her future hard fare.”

One of the robbers obeyed this unfeeling mandate ; and having sprinkled

a small quantity over her face, she showed symptoms of returning life.

“We will now secure our other fugitive,” said the Captain—“this one will revive the shock which the mention of our projects caused her.”

They now left the dungeon, and she heard them slowly move along the vaulted passage, dragging, as she conceived, rather than leading, the wounded Count after them. She now proceeded to examine, with minuteness, the objects by which she was surrounded. She soon discovered herself to be in one corner of a low dungeon, upon straw, which, however, appeared to have been recently thrown there. The

roof of this place was arched, and damp had covered it with slime and dew, which now hung in strings from the top. The walls were nearly in the same state. On the floor, in the further corner, stood a lamp, the red glance of which, served but to show the dark horrors of her abode. A small jug of water was placed over the side of her miserable couch, and served but to remind her of her wants, without the means of satisfying them. The bread, which was placed by the side of it, was covered with a blue mould.

“Wretches!” exclaimed Angela, in a fit of desperation and despair—“Now, indeed, you have rendered the climax

of my misery complete—torn from home—friends—every thing that could render existence desirable—immured in a cavern—excluded from all conversation with civilized beings—for ever shut out from all connexions with the world!—How wretched the loathed existence which I draw with me!—Now, indeed, has hope vanished, and a wretched blank, the void of despair, has succeeded! The gay visions of felicity, which I had promised myself, are vanished, at a blow so sudden and overwhelming, and leaves me in the power of men, whom fate had made their interest for ever to seclude from happiness.”

She then threw herself, in an agony

of despair, upon the ground. "Here let me for ever," she continued, "close an existence—embittered by treachery, and rendered burthensome by villany successful. Oh, Heavens! hear——"

She could utter no more ; a lethargy succeeded which overpowered her faculties, already blunted by sorrow and despair.

CHAPTER XVI.

DURING a fortnight after Valerio's return from the Rusuline Convent, to which it was supposed and believed, by all Venice that, Angela had retired upon the death of her father, he took up his residence at the Hotel de ———, and spent the time in retirement, which the state of his mind rendered unfit to exhibit in public. Grief for the serious losses which, in so short a time, he had

sustained, embittered every idea, whether devoted to the cabinet, or to inviting pleasures, which the Republic every day allowed its enchanted votaries. His mind was already too much occupied to enjoy the one, and the frivolity of the other displeased him. An incident, however, occurred to him as he was one evening returning from the Rialto, whither he had been, at the persuasion of Conrade, to divert his mind, in some measure, from the gloomy ideas which had taken possession of it, which gave a new turn, to his ideas.

They were turning the corner of a street, when they encountered two men, whose stealing pace, and disguised ap-

pearance, struck Conrade as something extraordinary.

“ We will, if you please,” said he to Valerio, “ follow them. I saw their game, I think, but this instant, turn round the corner at the opposite end of the street.—See! they quicken their pace—now he is out of sight.”

“ We will follow them, good Conrade,” said Valerio—“ if we can save the life of a man by our interference, we shall be amply repaid.—Mine, if I should even loose it in the attempt, is of no consequence. It would be but ridding the miserable of their woes.”

“ Hold,” said Conrade—“ you should endeavour to preserve it, then, in order

that you might have an opportunity of enjoying the contrast."

They had now arrived at the top of the street, and continued following the two men whom they suspected, always keeping them in view. They had by this time overtaken them, and were proceeding at the same pace with the suspected persons, when the latter were joined by too more ; from whom, however, after having whispered, they separated ; and the two whom they had first noticed, took another road, leaving their companions to pursue their, apparently intended, victim.

Valerio and his companion determined, however, to persevere in the pur-

suit, deeming it prudent, at the same time, not to appear to suspect their design. For this purpose they after took different roads, previously convincing themselves that the object of their pursuit must pass the same spot at nearly the same time.

They were now, however, arrived at the very outskirts of the city, and they began to doubt the propriety of the further continuance of their project, when suddenly, from a narrow street, the mysterious party was joined by the two personages who had first attracted the attention of our party.

“ We shall see the event very soon, now,” said Conrade ; “ let us, at least,

persevere, now we have proceeded so far. Those villains, doubtless, have the death of that gentleman in view."

"I entertain no doubt of it;" replied Valerio—"we will, however, disappoint them, if possible."

"He stops!" said Conrade, eagerly, as he saw the object of their commiseration suddenly make a stand at the door of a large building.

The four men immediately separated; and Valerio, afraid lest their continued appearance of following them should be construed into a wish of penetrating the mystery, took a station with Conrade behind the angle of a building immediately opposite. He saw, from

thence, the two foremost accost the stranger in words which appeared, from the consequence which ensued, to offend him. He drew his sword. The other two assassins, who had separated from their companions, with an intention, apparently, of taking another road, now prepared to join their former associates, and the stranger was, in a few moments, surrounded by the whole party.

“ This is the man !” exclaimed one of them, who appeared to be the leader.—
“ Follow us, quietly, my good friend ;” continued he, addressing their unfortunate prisoner, “ or we shall oblige you to do so.”

The singularity of this address surprised Valerio and his companion. They conjectured, and truly, that they were about to force him with them, and Valerio whispered Conrade, that they would prevent it."

"Agreed," cried the latter.—"Let us watch them."

They accordingly, under cover of the evening (for it was near twilight), sallied forth from the place, which had sheltered them from observation, and followed them at a sufficient distance just to observe their movements, and avoid their scrutinizing glances. Evening, however, began to obscure them from their view, and they exerted their

utmost efforts to follow them without being observed. They, at length, stopped at a large gate, in a very narrow street.

"This house, will, in future, be your abode, Signor," said one of the men, ringing a bell as he spoke.

"Never," said the person addressed—"let me die at least at liberty."

"Die here, then," exclaimed the whole troop.

"Now," exclaimed Valerio, rushing from an opposite turning, followed by Conrade.

The fight became general. The stranger defended himself with skill and courage. He had already lain one at his feet, when the folds of the gate were

thrown open ; and the assassins, discouraged at the so sudden failure of their plan, seized the body of their fallen companion, and rushed into the court-yard of the building. Valerio and his companion would have pursued them thither, but the doors closing, as though by magic, were fast in a moment, and placed an insurmountable bar between the pursuers and the pursued.

Valerio and Conrade turned in silence.

“ What do I not owe you,” exclaimed the stranger, bowing to Valerio.

“ Nothing,” returned he.

“ You have preserved,” continued the stranger, “ the life of one, who, if

he has not reason to wish a continuance of it himself, would preserve it because others have. My family are more indebted to you, Sir, than I am. Their existence depends on mine, and I should not care how soon I parted with my own, but that so many lives hang upon the preserving it. If you will condescend to accompany me, they shall express their gratitude in person."

Conrade seconded the entreaty, and Valerio agreed, upon condition, however, that he should not mention the recent occurrence till his departure, but merely introduce him as a friend. To this the person agreed, and they retraced their route back to the house

from which they had followed the stranger, when the robbers had him in custody. He loudly announced himself at the door, and was let in by a young woman, whom he announced to Valerio as his daughter.

They were now ushered up stairs into a neat room, where sat the lady of the house, and the remainder of the family.

"We began to be alarmed for your safety," said she, as her husband entered.

"Those robbers were nearly successful," continued the stranger, interrupting her, "but for the interposition of

these gentlemen," introducing, as he spoke, Valerio and Conrade.

"Have you so soon forgot your promise?" said Conrade, smiling.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed the lady—"then do we owe every thing to these chevaliers."

"You do, indeed—" returned the stranger. "But, Signor, you were mistaken in supposing the house into which they retired their residence. Had you not interposed, they would have continued their route. Though I have escaped now, I may not always be so fortunate; I am an object of their jealousy and hatred, and their continued persecution will, some time or other, I fear, be successful."

“Thank the Virgin,” cried the lady, you have escaped this once; and how shall I express to you, Signors, the gratitude I feel?”

“By restraining the expressions of it,” answered Valerio. “But if it be not impertinent curiosity, I should like to be informed of the circumstances which led to it.”

“We owe every thing to you,” replied the stranger. “It is but reasonable that you should know whom you have delivered from the pangs of those assassins.”

The Narrative of the Stranger.

“My name,” said the persecuted man,

“ is Almeric : a title is annexed to it, but under such circumstances, that I am obliged to dispense with such an appendage. My earlier days were marked with every pleasing prospect that could render my future life happy. Alas ! that the picture should have become so overcast.

“ In one of the disputes which have so often interrupted the tranquillity of Venice, my father, in resentment for some insult he supposed himself to have received, retired in disgust from the senate, and joined the mal-contents. A single day sufficed for the utter defeat and extermination of the rebels. My father was condemned to die, and hi

surviving followers to the gallies. This sentence, however, was rescinded in favour of my father. He was allowed his life, but his property of every description was forfeited to the State. I need not say such misfortunes broke his heart. He did not long reap the advantage of the lenity of the senate. Three months after the occurrences which I have detailed, I saw him laid in the earth.

“ Many noblemen, who had secretly favoured my father’s course when alive, now extended their good-will towards me, and, by their joint patronage, I was placed in a situation fully adequate to my wishes, humbled as my mind had

been by misfortune. I had fulfilled the duties of my new situation about twelve months, when I was one evening on a visit to the Count de ——— my most intimate friend, and as he stiled himself, benefactor. I then saw his daughter for the first time. An hour's acquaintance sufficed on my part to give birth to sensations, till then entirely new to me, and the next morning I bent my steps again to the house of the Count, though upon the most frivolous pretence in the hope of again beholding the object of my meditations.

“ I was again gratified: the old Count was in his study with his daughter by his side. Decency, however,

compelled me to retire, upon the business which I had made the pretext of my visit being concluded.

“ On my return to my own house, melancholy and dejected, I retired to my chamber. I was then scarcely aware of the extent of my infatuation. I was in love, but I did not attempt to analyze my sensations. I continued, however, the duties of my situation, if possible, with redoubled activity, in hope that diligence might ameliorate my situation, and gain me a place, of more importance in the state. My wishes were gratified, and I was in a fair way of regaining that task in society, which my father, by his imprudence, had

lost ; when, under the influence of a malignant star, a circumstance occurred which changed my fair prospects, and covered with clouds of the blackest cast my visions of felicity, (for alas ! I never enjoyed felicity but by visions) and for ever obscured my rising ideas.

“ I had been almost since the first glance I had had of the lady Victoria in the daily habit of visiting the Palaygo di.——, till my frequent visits, and the friendly reception which her father always gave me, procured me a look of complaisancy. I returned one of I don't know what, and bowing, retired. From glances, as though by mutual consent, we came to words.”

“ The narrator cast a look of retrospection at his wife. She smiled ; though grief and decay had left a furrow on her cheek, and retired. Almerine continued :—

“ Even now the recollection, though painful, is pleasing, and though the idea costs me a pang, I cannot help bringing past days, (though by far the greater part of them marked by anguish) to my mind—sweet indeed were the first moments of my new existence, as I then considered it, but misery and despair stalked in and bade the deceitful flatterer hope, avaunt !

“ I had one evening repaired rather late to the house of my benefactor, for

such my proud heart, though often murmuring at the decree, was obliged, upon reflection, to acknowledge him, and found his daughter in tears, and himself absent. I threw myself at her feet; reflection whispered this action was improper. She arose, and retired, casting a look of reprehension and entreaty towards me as she left the room.

“ I was convinced of the impropriety of my conduct as I left the house, cursing the moment which brought me into it, till I reflected that the mistake was not irremediable, and that the misunderstanding was attributable only to myself. I waited anxiously, for some moment would perhaps present me the

same opportunity, and experience had taught me how to make a better use of it.

At length the moment arrived,—I hastened to the house; the outward appearance indicated a court in the interior of the edifice. I announced myself with a tremulous hand. The servant appeared.—

“The Count de ——,” said he, “left Venice this morning, together with his daughter.”

“Do you know,” cried I, “the cause of their departure, or the road which they have taken?”

“Not exactly,” replied he, “but I have reason to suppose the Resuline

convent, near ———, will be the end of their journey, at least it was hinted so, when their intention of leaving Venice was announced to us."

"I did not reply, but left the door in disgust with myself, and with every one. At one moment I resolved to follow them, and the next I considered the idea and the head that conceived it mad. I then resolved to pursue my first plan, and the thought, by being too frequently indulged, determined me, and I left Venice accordingly, taking the road which I had supposed them to have traced before me.

It will be necessary in order to the elucidation of my narrative, however,

to inform you that the Count de —— had a son who had been absent several years, and had, at length, returned to his father's house. He held a commission under the Emperor, and was beloved and respected by every one who had the honour of his acquaintance. The blood, however, which flowed in his veins was rather too forcible in its current to distribute correctly the different sensations which arose in his mind, and if offended, or if he conceived himself so—nothing could shield the object from his revenge. If it were possible for him to confront the unfortunate object who had excited it, with his sword. His rashness, though gene-

rally in just causes, had several times nearly cost him his life ; but no warning, no example could retain him if circumstances arose, which he considered hostile to justice, or his friends. This character, just as I have described, arrived at the moment when my wav-
ing ideas had determined on venturing in one point, which was to follow the route of the Count and his daughter. I was just about to step into the vehicle which was waiting for me, when he drove up, having, however, first called at the Chateau, but finding his father and sister absent, and no reasonable cause assigned for their departure, he had come in search of me to explain the mystery.

I felt, at once, the impropriety of my intentions, and could scarcely conceal the confusion I felt. He did not, however, perceive it.

“ I—I am totally unacquainted,” stammered I, “ with the route they have taken.”

“ I am very sorry to hear you say so,” replied my new friend, “ if you could have given me any intimation of the road which they took, I would pursue them, but I suppose I must remain a guest at the Chateau without a host.”

He laughed as he concluded, but I was too much engaged with my reflections to listen to his sallies ; so he left me.

With him seemed to recede my objections to the journey, and I again

prepared to mount the carriage, which had already been waiting so long. When seated, I ordered the driver to take the usual road to the Convent, at ———.

We drove at a furious rate, and ere the retiring sun had tinged the western hills we were within sight of the Convent, and likewise of the chariot of the Count, which was about to return. I sunk back in my vehicle, and turning my face from that part of the road on which I saw it coming, I passed it without observation on the part of the old man; who, I perceived, was the only person in it.

On our arrival at the inn, I ordered

my servant to prepare, as I intended to pass the night there. My reflections during this night were of the most unaccountable nature. I thought that this step, though it might procure me a wife, might, at the same time, deprive me of the means of supporting one; but how feeble are the arguments of reason opposed to those of love and inclination. I was in love, and in love I expected every thing was comprised. I enjoyed happiness by anticipation, alas! I have never done so in reality.

Day, at length, broke through the misty curtains of the east, and peeped forth upon the face of nature, dispelling those dewy tears which its absence

had created ; and I, but little refreshed, arose and took my station at a window, which, after first overlooking a vast track of diversified heath and field, commanded a view of the tall grey towers of the monastery, which appeared in the distance like a ruin.

“ Unfortunately,” said Valério, “ I have viewed the same objects from, perhaps, the same spot, and under the same impressions.”

“ I beg your pardon, Signor,” returned the stranger, “ those incidents have made such an impression upon my mind, that even now, though the circumstances I detail, are many—many years ago, I feel their full effect on

my relaxed nerves. But I will continue, if my prolix and mournful tale—a tale of sorrow, be not disagreeable to the ears of those whose minds have never been ruffled with a sigh.”

“I am not that man,” returned Valerio, “I pray you proceed.”

“You are impatient, perhaps, but the circumstances which I am relating are so interwoven with those immediately succeeding, I will, however, proceed.”

“I waited anxiously the moment which should afford me an audience of the Lady Abbess, but when that moment arrived, I felt a reluctance to apply, which I could scarcely resolve to

surmount. It had far exceeded the hour which I had appointed myself, when, as I was sitting at the window, still undecided how to act, a carriage drove forward towards the Convent, in which I recognised the brother of my Victoria. I withdrew from the window in time, I knew, to avoid his catching a glance of me.

A project immediately suggested itself—what projects will not love suggest? I dressed myself in the habit of a peasant, and followed as soon as possible, the carriage of the young Count. I found the vehicle at the entrance-gate, and understood from the porter that the owner was in the par-

lour with the young novitiate. I pretended poverty, and begged charity of the man as an excuse for my application.

He said as soon as leisure afforded him an opportunity, he would apply to the Lady Abbess for orders respecting me."

During the time I was waiting at the lodge which the porter occupied, several visitors appeared, and I saw them speak to the novitiate through the grate and depart, except indeed a sacred title entitled them to distinction, and then an interview in the parlour was allowed them, and that was in the presence of the Lady Abbess.

Satisfied with the observations I had made, I pleaded an excuse for my departure, and returned to the inn, where I immediately took my station at the window I had before occupied, determined to watch the moment when the return of the Count's carriage should announce that the first wish of my soul—an interview with Victoria practicable. This opportunity, however, did not come till towards the close of the day, and then the design I supposed abortive, at least for that day. I restrained my impatience, therefore, and quietly took up my abode at the inn, till the morn of the next day, which would, I hoped, be then propitious.

The moment at length arrived, and I hastened to the convent in the vehicle which had brought me from Venice, and was introduced as a friend of the lady Victoria di ——.

"I have unfortunate tidings for you," said the lady Abbess, "if you are the friend of the Count di ——, we have not seen the lady since vespers yesterday evening—we have dispatched a messenger to Venice, in order, if possible, to discover her track, but I am afraid the effort will be a vain one. We ordered people out in every direction to intercept her retreat, as soon as we discovered it, but hitherto our exertions, have not been crowned with

even a prospect of success ; but perseverance will accomplish any thing, and she cannot be beyond pursuit.

She might have continued her harangue an hour longer, in the same strain if she had chosen so to do, without interruption on my part ; she had conjured up a series of ideas, which even her oratory could not dispel, and I, mechanically, took my leave, in order that I might more uninterruptedly ruminate on the intelligence which had just been communicated to me. The spirit of divination, however, I did not possess, and who could be the companion of her flight ? I endeavoured in vain to conjecture.

I did not know whether to consider the circumstance of deception as a favourable, or an unfavourable incident, as it regarded my own views with respect to her. I, however, had reflection sufficient to restrain my emotions before the lady Abbess; and as soon, therefore, as politeness permitted, I had returned to the inn, and sitting myself in my apartment, began to reflect upon the strangeness of the circumstances which had led to my disappointment.

“She is gone, however,” continued I, as I concluded my reflections, “without advancing nearer the truth, and I must endeavour to trace her;—’tis no

common incident that has occasioned her flight, and it is not a small one that shall retard my pursuit."

I immediately returned to Venice, and, as if ignorant of even a knowledge of the departure of the Count's daughter, I desired an interview with him; I was shewn into his library: a deep frown shaded his brow.

"My daughter," said he to me as I entered, "thank heaven! is safe from machination, and I am empowered, by virtue of my office, to discharge you from your's; — an acknowledgment, therefore, I demand of you as the receipt of the salary which is due to you, and desire never to see you again.

‘Your perfidy is only equal to the address with which you concealed it; but I discovered it, ere the further prosecution of it, on your part, rendered a more vigorous opposition to it on mine, unnecessary.’

I was struck with surprise, and I had almost said dismay at these words of my only remaining friend. The justice of them I was obliged, myself, to acknowledge, even though I considered my punishment rather premature. Revenge, however, I knew to be within my reach, and I hastened from the house, but not till by vague and ambiguous threats I had given him reason to suppose it was so.

“ I was, in some measure, acquainted with a connexion which subsisted between a pretended friend of the old Count, and a certain gentleman, who sometimes officiated as valet to his employer, but who was in reality only a bandit attached to his suite. Though the pretended regard of the Marquis, for my old friend, sometimes appeared to have superseded all animosity ; I, however, by frequent watching, and continued suspicion, discovered that the reverse was the case.

As I retired from the abode of pampered power, and, at the same time, fawning hypocrisy, it struck me the flight of ictoria was connected with

some scheme of revenge, which the concealed enmity of the Marquis di — might have suggested. I therefore repaired immediately to my own house, and, having prepared for a long absence from Venice, I set forward once more for the convent from which I had so recently returned.

It was about midnight when I reached my old apartment at the inn. Here, therefore, I was obliged to remain till the succeeding day afforded me an opportunity of again visiting the convent, where I hoped to be able to find some clue as a guide to my researches, or in confirmation of my suspicions.

That moment at length arrived, and I was admitted as before.

“ I should have expected,” said the lady Abbess to me, as soon as I had payed my respects to her, “ that after my message to the Count, of last evening, I should have seen the old gentleman in person.”

“ Really,” stammered I, engagements of a very peculiar na——

“ No excuses,” returned the good lady. “ I am not entitled to any, but I thought the feelings of nature would have obliged him to make the necessary inquiries himself. My ideas upon this subject may be communicated to him if you please. The father, I should

have thought, would have prevailed over the courtier; but I find ambition in the world takes places of every thing; it is not the first time I have received proof of it, even in this sequestered retreat."

"For such a method of procedure, I had not been prepared for; I was not, therefore, ready with my answer; I however, muttered another excuse: this was treated like the first; provoking, however, a more elaborate answer than the first. It concluded thus:—

"Sister Jacquilina will communicate to you all she knows about the manner of her leaving her convent. But," continued she feelingly, "I am afraid art

has been made use of in taking her hence, upon the nature of which I should have wished to have consulted her father; but, poor girl, ere he arrives, she may be irretrievably lost."

She burst into tears as she pronounced the last words.—"She may be lost for ever"—"continued she sobbing—"ere he can arrive. But, perhaps, Signor," turning to me, "from the clue, though a slight one I must confess it is, you, from the knowledge of the family, which you undoubtedly possess, may be able to receive some information from it; I will order Jacquilina to be called."

"I requested she would do so, not, however, without, internally dreading the interview. A nun entered the room.

“Tell this Signor,” said the Lady Abbess to her, in an authoritative tone, “what you know respecting the flight, as I call it, of our young novice the Signora ——.”

The nun heaved a sigh—“It was not voluntary on her part. I again repeat,” said she, “the reason, however, of it, or the circumstances which led to it, I am totally unacquainted with. It cannot be supposed, I should have been much acquainted with the affairs of a person, my first knowledge of whom was scarcely of four hours standing.”

“With the manner of her flight,” said I, “you have not acquainted me.”

“ The circumstances, as they occurred, I will relate to you, Signor, ” replied the nun—“ but my good mother must not interrupt me, as my story will not be varied from the original one. I should only depart from the truth were I to do so.”

“ Let me have the circumstances, then :” said I, tired of the dispute—“ while we are discussing the validity of the evidence, the culprit may make her escape.”

“ Signor,” said the nun, hastily, as I uttered my last words—“ I was, by order of our holy mother, conducting the young lady round the garden of our convent, and had reached the further end

of the path which leads to the recess, and had turned into it, desiring the young lady to follow me. Immediately before me lay our way back; on either side of us, rows of shrubs; and behind us, the wall which bounded the garden, concealed from observation by trees and bushes, so successfully placed, as entirely to conceal the boundaries of the garden on that side, from the passing eye of curiosity, should it ever attempt to penetrate the almost impervious foliage. I had taken my seat in the recess, and on turning to address my companion, whom I supposed by my side, I discovered she was not in the apartment. I immediately ran from the

place towards the convent, but had scarcely passed three yards from it, when a faint scream from behind the grotto, arrested my flight. I turned, and saw above me, for a moment, on the top of the wall, the person missing. She descended on the other side, and I saw immediately after, a man of ruffian-like appearance follow her over, as though impelling her forward, and almost immediately, the clattering of horses' feet, proclaimed their departure. The sound awakened me to a sense of my situation, and that of the unfortunate person who had just left me. I knew, should she be taken, that nothing would screen me from the vengeance of the church."

“How did you know that?” interrupted the Abbess.

“The Nun, without answering, respectfully retired.

“You may, perhaps think me harsh,” she continued—“but as I am responsible for the safety of those committed to my charge, I must be severe. She is, however, correct as to the treatment she would experience, unless she could give a satisfactory account of the reason of her flight; she would be for ever immured in a cell, intended for the reception of such criminals; for though she was not professed, she was received into this house as on the term of probation, and was never again to return to the

world. The punishment would be severe, were it proved she voluntarily fled from it. I am, however, of Jacquilina's opinion, that that was not the case."

The good Mother had all the conversation to herself. I was so affected at the knowledge which I had thus gained of the strict discipline which reigned within these inhospitable walls, that I secretly rejoiced at her escape from such a place, could I have divested myself of the idea that she was now in a still less enviable situation."

" My knowledge, however, of this probably I concealed from this holy Lady, but suffered her to proceed with her lengthened harangue ; I with diffi-

culty, however, concealing my impatience at the tedious length of her periods. This, however, had not the least effect towards shortening the old lady's disquisition.

" During the continuance of her speech, I was meditating a means of pursuit, but the difficulty of finding a clue by which to begin it, was an insurmountable bar to my hopes. These, however, I contrived to keep alive, by ruminating on the probability of chance discovering to me the cause of her flight.

" At the conclusion, or rather at a pause which I mistook for it, I begged to be shown the spot from whence her flight was effected, in order that I

might ascertain the probable route, by surveying the road without-side. My request was complied with, and I soon discovered, that the only probable means of eluding pursuit, would have been for them to have taken the one which led from the convent, towards a forest, rather than that which led towards the inhabited part of the country, as that would have exposed the ravishers to the observation of the residents at the Convent. The danger of such an event, I concluded, they must be fully aware of. These considerations hastened my departure, and on my return into the parlours I hinted my wish to that effect.

“Tell the Count,” said she, “on your return, that his daughter had been stolen from the bosom of this holy sanctuary by ravishers. Tell him all you have heard,” and she burst into tears, either of madness or disappointment. “My grief I cannot express. But our holy Father will interest Heaven in the discovery, and we shall have her returned; for what wretch dare keep her after his anathema has been pronounced against her detainers? Be they who they may, they dare not dispute so great an authority. The members of our holy community must be protected, or virtue and forbearance would be at an end. In less than a week, I think,

we may reckon upon her return. Those whom I have dispatched in pursuit of her, will not—must not come back without her. But, pray, Signor, did not the Count talk of coming here in person; if he could not name the time at least he might have mentioned his intention of doing so, as soon as that would permit. I however dispatched a messenger last night, and I expect his return every moment——here he is, I suppose, by the bustle;" and the Count entered as she spoke.

" Judge what my sensations, at that moment, were, while I stood before him like a criminal confronted, and judged by his answer. He first regained the

use of his faculties, which appeared to me to be suspended.

“Wretch!” said he, “have I discovered the dark plots which you have been planning to ruin me? Have I been cherishing a serpent in my bosom, to sting me to the heart at the moment when I was pressing him to it. But though I have discovered this treachery, I am not in time to prevent the effects of it, if I comprehend aught, the full extent of my misfortune.—“Your letter,” addressing himself to the lady Abbess, “says she is flown.”

“I do not comprehend you, my Lord,” replied the Abbess—“how

can this person be connected with the flight of your daughter?"

"He has imposed on you, my good Lady," replied the Count, "the deceiver has robbed me of my child, and of my happiness; and my only consolation is revenge. Revenge is within my power; I beg you, therefore," addressing himself to me, "to follow me."

"I obeyed, but not tremblingly. I had no idea of an attack of the nature of the one which he had prepared for me.

"I followed him into the courtyard."

"I suspected your intention," said he to me, as we passed through the va-

rious passages which led from the parlour to the gate—"and the letter which I received from the Abbess was but a confirmation of my worst fears. Your consummate villany has robbed me of my life's blessing; but justice and an injured father demand reparation at your hands."

"He was almost inclined to lay violent hands on me, during this apostrophe."

"Wretch!" said he, and he grasped his sword.

"I appeared to regard this motion of rage with the most marked unconcern. He was the more incensed."

“ Venice shall see an example set them of perfidy joined to the most consummate villany and hypocrisy—Follow me,” continued he, seeing me almost mechanically turn back—“ follow me ! I say. Does my sword, or your own guilt terrify you ? ”

“ Neither,” said I, recollecting myself, “ even your impressive arguments will not have the least effect in deterring me from an object which I have once determined on pursuing. Your threats, too, are as futile as your imprecation.—Venice shall see me ; but, if human means can accomplish it, it will see me the husband of your daughter.”

"Never," said he," brandishing the sword which he held in his hand in the air—"never—I have sufficient power to render you less ambitious."

"We had by this time reached the outside wall of the Convent, and were within sight of a vehicle which belonged, as I supposed, to the old Count."

"Draw!" said he, attacking me as he spoke—"Revenge I will take myself, and not leave my cause to the slow operations of a court to determine between us."

"I drew my sword, but his method of fighting convinced me that his only aim was to draw me into a battle, which was a preconcerted signal, for I had

scarcely made one pass at him ere I was seized by four stout armed men, gagged and bound, and forced into the vehicle which appeared to have been so conveniently waiting for me.

“The suddenness of the affair deprived me for some moments of the power of action. The quick motion of the carriage however, soon restored my wandering faculties, and my first use of them was to see the road the machine was taking. I soon had sufficient confirmation of my first conjectures, that I was on that which led to Venice. My joy did not equal my surprise at this discovery. I was in the power of a vindictive and powerful man. One too,

who was well aware of my intentions towards his daughter, and which intentions he considered so highly derogatory, that he would spare no means to prevent their success. From these considerations I had more to dread than merely a state prison, and the punishment which the law had provided for such crimes, but I had to dread confinement by the wretches who composed his suit, and who were banditted in his pay in dungeons perhaps worse than those attached to the inquisition. This, I reflected, must be the case, whether conducted before the tribunal, or confined by the Count himself. I now began, however, to form conclu-

sions on the probable consequences of my adventures. Nothing, I reflected, could be proved against me :—He only presumed I was in search of his daughter, with whose fate he was himself unacquainted.

“ During the time, however, so buried had I been in reflections, that I had not observed the turn which the carriage had taken from the beaten road, till the noise of the vehicle, as it made an opening through the leafy intricacies of the forest, awakened my attention.

“ In the name of heaven !” thought I, “ whither am I about to be conveyed.”

“ The last words escaped my lips, I believe, for the robber who accom-

panied me replied—" Do not be impatient, you will be very safely provided for in the course of an hour. I can assure you if you escape from the very comfortable lodgings which is prepared for you these three years, you will be a happy fellow—would you were there already, for I am hungry."

" I did not appear to attend much to the fellow's apostrophe, but not a word escaped me. New wonders were disclosed in the course of it; what occasion could they have had for preparations for me—had my fate been determined, then?" I asked myself, " according to the words of this man, an hour, perhaps, would clear up this

seeming mystery—till then, I must ultimately bear my confinement.

“ A little more than the time mentioned brought us to the residence of the banditti, in the forest.

“ Here is your abode,” cried the principal of my guards to me, as I alighted—“ till circumstances arise which either make it necessary to remove or release you, your future liberty depends upon the turn of a moment; rest satisfied, however, that you will not remain long in suspense.”

“ With this assurance, which was all the information I could procure from my gaolers, I was obliged to express myself satisfied, and I was escorted by them up a flight of stone stairs, which

terminated in a gallery consisting of suits of apartments apparently fitted up for the reception of persons of my unfortunate description. I was conducted to the one which appeared to be situated at the extremity of the building.

“There is your residence,” said one of the men, pushing me in as he spoke; “you must wait with patience till your fate is determined.”—“You must wait perforce,” rejoined his companion sarcastically, “patient or otherwise.”

“They then left me to my meditations, which were not, as you may guess, of the most pleasing description.

“Could the Count” I asked myself, “be aware of my intention to visit th

convent? That he was so, was evident? from his preparations for my reception. Notwithstanding appearances were so much in favour of this presumption, I did not readily admit it. What reason could he have for following me? did he suspect I would visit his daughter at the convent,—and was he determined to prevent it? what reason could he have for supposing such a thing? I repeatedly asked myself—none.”

“ The more rational conclusion was, that the men who had followed him were his regular attendants. I knew, from experience, such men were attached to the suits of persons of the Count’s rank, and perhaps chance had

led him to the secluded retreat of his daughter, and his rage had prompted him to the hasty resolution of confining me for the insult I had offered him. The time I was likely to pass within the decaying walls of my prison, every moment of my detention here, added a fresh pang to my misery;—every moment, perhaps, separated me further from the object of my fondest wishes. In her he had, indeed, wounded me to the quick. It was the only part vulnerable, and this he had attacked. Patience was my only resource; and I determined on taking the robbers advice, and bear my disappointments with the most perfect stoicism.

“ This resolution was a very salutary

one. I passed six weeks in this place in the most perfect retirement, seeing even the face of my appointed gaoler but seldom, and then only for a moment, as he silently deposited my meals on a large old-fashioned table, which adorned the apartment, and which was the only piece of furniture it contained, except an elbow chair co-eval with itself, and an iron lamp suspended from the ceiling. At the expiration of this time, I began to think of a possibility of escape; but this I soon found was impossible, unless, indeed, chance should prove propitious, and till then I gave up the idea.

Two months had I passed in the decayed abode of merciless severity,

when, one evening, as I sat in my chair of state, ruminating on my mysterious fate, I was suddenly surprised at the removal of a secret pannel in one corner of the apartment in which I sat. I anxiously awaited the event of this mysterious prelude, in silence, not, however, without a mixture of dread at what might be the result of this incident. While, however, I gazed intently on the spot, expecting every moment to see some one enter, through the aperture, I heard the distant sound of voices, and the pannel instantly closed with a swift and tremulous motion, and I awaited the sound of returning footsteps, but in vain.

“ Rising from my chair, I hastened to

that part of the room on which the pannel was situate, and stooping, applied my ear as close as possible to the wainscoat, in the hope of catching a sound, but in vain. None reached it. All was hushed. I endeavoured to remove it, but without effect ; it resisted my utmost efforts. I struck it several times with my foot, without making the least impression on it. A hollow reverberating sound followed the concussion, but every effort to further research was unavailing, and I at length gave up the idea as impracticable. I resumed my place in my chair, and sat brooding till twilight obscured the whole face of nature, and veiled the surrounding objects in almost impenetrable gloom.

“ It was late in the evening ere they deigned to illumine my chamber by lighting the lamp, which hung in the middle of it. They retired, however, almost immediately, and I was again left to resume my researches to discover the cause of the mysterious removal of the pannel. I was, however, finally obliged to give up the enterprize as impracticable, and I again took my station in my chair, having, however, previously removed it close to one of the Gothic windows which admitted the light into my decaying apartment.— The moon was rising majestically behind the tops of the neighbouring hills, silvering mild their dew-covered tops with its mild beams. Philomel, as

though rejoicing at the softly-sighing sounds which the zephyrs breathed through the spreading foliage, sent forth its notes with redoubled sweetness, and waked the sensitive soul to exquisite sensations of happiness. Of such sensations, however, I was not susceptible. But even to me, absorbed as were my reasoning faculties in the sad certainty of my own fate, the pleasing scene before me gave a melancholy pleasure.

“I had sat, viewing the prospect without the least attention to passing time, till a clock, which I had noticed in the gallery, tolled three. I hastily arose, and taking my candle from the table, was leaving the room for the one ad-

joining, when, casting my eye on the pannel for the last time, I perceived it again move from its place. Resting the taper once more on the table, I waited anxiously the conclusion of the adventure, not, however, without some apprehensions of the visit being of a hostile nature. When the aperture was fully disclosed, I remained so for a few moments without any indications of a farther elucidation. I however kept my eye on the aperture, and presently saw, how shall I describe my sensations of joy at the circumstance, my Victoria! she called me through the vacuity.— Joy and surprise left me, for a moment, motionless; but quickly recovering, I flew to the spot, and soon clasped in

my arms the origin of all my misfortunes. She gently disengaged herself from my embrace, and throwing herself into the chair, sat for a moment as though exhausted with recent fatigue.

“How is it we meet thus?” I exclaimed, throwing myself at her feet—
“Can your father have been so impolitically cruel, as to have confined you in this place? Tell me!—oh! tell me!—can chance have conducted you hither, or tyranny!—how much am I indebted to either of them for this meeting?”

“I must retire again,” said she, in some measure recovered. “If I should be discovered, all will be lost.”

“You shall not leave me again,” I exclaimed, taking her arm frantically,

mad almost at the idea, but a look from her, shewed the imprudence of my request.

“But tell me, then,” I continued—tell me how came you informed of my residence here?”

“To yourself,” replied she—“approach the window.”

“I did as she desired.”

“From yon angle of the ruin,” continued she, “on which the moon now shines so bright, I have beheld you contemplating the diamond-studded belt of night, and intently regarding the minutest incident which appeared to catch your attention. I vainly endeavoured to do this through the small-grated

window of my apartment. I believe it was in vain—was it not ?”

“ I replied in the affirmative, blaming myself, at the same time, for my stupidity.”

“ Do not chagrin yourself upon that head ; perhaps if you had seen my signal, this meeting would not have been practicable.”

“ I was still more eager for an explanation. The circumstances which led to my imprisonment I cannot now relate to you, the narrative is too prolix. I must now leave you. To-morrow night, at this time, we meet again ; till then, adieu. I must now away.”

“ Adieu—” she cried, stooping as she spoke, and ere I could attempt to

prevent it, she had vanished, and stopped all possibility of pursuit by shutting the pannel closely after her.

“ I remained in a state almost of annihilation at the suddenness both of her appearance and retreat, and I scarcely knew whether to regard the passing event as an illusion of the sense, or as a reality. Reflection, however, soon convinced me of their identity ; and, eased of a load of anguish and misery, at knowing that at least she was near me, I retired, if it were at that moment possible, to repose.”

Here the stranger broke the thread of his narrative.

“ But now, Signor,” said he, addressing Valerio, “ I have detailed the cir

cumstances which preceded my confinement, and those which occurred to me during the first part of it, if they possess any interest, those which succeeded do likewise ; but I must beg a respite for the remainder. If you will take some refreshment, you will gratify me by doing so ; but at any time which you may appoint, I will relate the remaining incidents which have marked my life, and reduced me to the situation in which you have found me."

Valerio consented, and immediately the table was spread with the store which the larder of the persecuted host afforded. The meal was a welcome one to Valerio, who partook it with a zest unknown to him for several weeks. At the conclusion (the night being far advanced), he returned with a promise on the part of the host, and an agreement on the part of Valerio, the one to relate, and the other to be present, on the ensuing evening.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.

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